
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

Second Semester Examination
Academic Session 2006/2007

April 2007

HET 322 – LANGUAGE, POWER AND IDEOLOGY

Duration : 3 hours

Please check that this examination paper consists of SIX pages of printed material before you begin the examination.

Answer FOUR questions: TWO from Section A and TWO from Section B.

Section A

1. What do you understand by “critical language study”? How important is this approach to language study to the discipline of linguistics?

[100 marks]

2. Discuss the following terms as clearly as possible. Make sure you illustrate your answers with specific examples.

[a] Discourse and Ideology

[b] Modality and Transitivity

[100 marks]

3. Analyse the choice of vocabulary items, pronoun usage, modality and transitivity structures of the following text. Based on your analysis, which particular discourses and ideology is this text trying to promote? Provide valid reasons for your answer.

America's Mission

As George W. Bush barnstormed across America on his way to a historic sweep of both houses of Congress in the fall, one line in his stump speech always made the packed arenas and airplane hangars erupt in cheers. “Freedom is not America’s gift to the world. It is God’s gift to the world,” the president would say in city after city. “This nation never conquers, but we liberate.” The line was Bush’s, but it also came straight out of American tradition, and had that peculiarly American mix of hubris and humility. America’s going to rescue the world, sometimes with gun blazing, but only so the world will have the freedom to do as it pleases (including the freedom, presumably to criticise America). It was as if Bush had struck a live nerve connecting him to adoring audiences. Throaty roars from the crowd, miniature Stars and Stripes waving in a frenzy above their heads. Bush, his brows narrowed over his close-set eyes, would then lean over the podium, punch the air and declare: “Out of the evil done to America will come a more peaceful world...I promise you: *its’ going to happen!*”

Bush rarely talks in detail about his plans for a new world order. And he rarely talks about his faith in God. Yet these personal beliefs—in the inalienable goodness of American power, in the divine provenance of its values—may be the defining forces in the world today. That is because Bush has most of his country behind him, and it just happens to be the most powerful country in the history of the world. And now the final piece is in place: electoral legitimacy. Whatever Bush lacked in self-confidence because of his “accidental presidency” of 2000—and he didn’t lack much—he now has the imprimatur to carry out his global transformation, perhaps until 2008. “I think he really believes he was placed here to do this as part of a divine plan.” Says a senior administration official. That means reshaping the world for good and freedom. It means toppling tyrants. It means achieving, through force, what some of his advisers say cannot be done through treaties: freeing the world from rogue-controlled weapons of mass destruction. The “evil-doers” who perpetrated September 11—the event that is driving all this—have no more motivations that can be justified. They are evil. They will be scourged. Enough said.

Newsweek December 2002—February 2003 (special edition)

[100 marks]

Section B

4. Below is an extract from an article entitled *How we love to ‘cinta’ in Bahasa* written by Amir Muhammad which appeared in New Straits Times (18 January 2007). Discuss the presuppositions and implicatures expressed and/or assumed by the writer and his attitude towards them.

So there I was, wandering about a large MPH bookstore, when I came across the bestseller list of the Malay fiction section.

Since we are all aware that Malay fiction is going through a boom in sales, and since I am always eager to keep my finger on the pulse of popular culture, I made sure to jot all the titles down.

I shall keep you in suspense no longer. Here are the 10 best-selling Malay novels for the past week:

1. *Kasih Yang Tercalar*
2. *Mahligai Cinta*
3. *Izinkan Ku Bahagia*
4. *Berikan Cintamu*
5. *Saat Cinta Bersemi*
6. *Bahtera Kasih*
7. *Takdir Cinta*
8. *Sepi Tanpa Cinta*
9. *Jika Benar Cinta*
10. *Beginilah Cinta*

Alert readers will have noticed something by now. Nine out of the 10 books have *cinta* or *kasih* in the title. Yes, love is all around.

The lone exception is the title in third place: *Izinkan Ku Bahagia* by Leeya Myra. How did Leeya get to become such an iconoclast that she dared to go against the *cinta/kasih* hegemony? Is her book really not about love at all?

I picked it up and read the blurb at the back. The first sentence is: *Setiap manusia mencari cinta dalam hidup mereka*. (Every person is looking for love in their life.) You said it, sister! Especially if that person is in the market for some Malay fiction.

I walked a few feet to the other best-seller list. You know, the one for books in English. And the Top 10 there are:

1. *False Impression*
2. *Slow Burn*
3. *The Five People You Meet In Heaven*
4. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter*
5. *The Inheritance of Loss*
6. *Every Breath You Take*
7. *The Alchemist*
8. *For One More Day*
9. *Seven Ancient Wonders*
10. *The Historian*

Where is the love? When you read in English, does this mean you've lost that loving feeling?

Now, there are two opposing ways we can interpret this data:

1. People who read Malay novels are so filled with love that it suffuses every facet of their being. It affects all their choices, including what to read.

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Love is all they need. They feel it in their fingers; they feel it in their bones. That is why they want to share the love, including with book manufacturers.

2. People who read Malay novels are so deprived of love that they need to seek it out in books, just to catch up on what they've been missing. They got no love, which is why they want love. ...

[100 marks]

5. The extract below is part of an interview on a British talk show, involving a guest (Alice) and a host (Host), in which Alice is asked by the host to tell the story of how she came to live with her father and his partner.

Host: Tell me about this ... household	[1]
Alice: erm well both my parents are very loving ... very accepting of lots of things ... and therefore that rubs off ... on my sister and I ... erm	[2]
Host: How old are you?	[3]
Alice: Nineteen	[4]
Host: How old's your sister?	[5]
Alice: Sixteen	[6]
Host: mmm	[7]
Alice: and erm ... I've lived with both separately ... I've lived with Dad for the last couple of years ... now	[8]
Host: Does Dad have a partner?	[9]
Alice: Yes he does ... Pedro	[10]
Host: You live with Dad and his partner?	[11]
Alice: Yes.	[12]
Host: How old were you when you lived with Dad and his partner?	[13]
Alice: erm ... I was seventeen when I moved to Melbourne	[14]
Host: Cause you problems?	[15]
Alice: No	[16]
Host: Did you find it strange?	[17]
Alice: No	[18]
Host: Find it difficult?	[19]
Alice: No. It's just like living with any other parent and their partner	[20]
Host: It's just like living with any other parent and their partner	[21]

(Source: Thornborrow 2004)

Discuss the extract in terms of how the discourse type and structure position the subjects, that is, the talk show host and Alice.

[100 marks]

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6. Discuss, with examples, the ideology behind advertisements as proposed by Fairclough (2001).

[100 marks]